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REFERENCE:

ATTACHMENT TO M-5968  
MARCH 1969  
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OPEN-WIRE TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORK  
LAOTIAN PANHANDLE

1. SIGNIFICANCE:

THIS BOARD DEPICTS THE ENTIRE KNOWN OPEN-WIRE TELECOMMUNICATION NETWORK IN THE LAOTIAN PANHANDLE, A TOTAL OF 500 NM INCLUDING NEW UNNUMBERED TRACE CONSTRUCTION.

2. LOCATION:

THE NETWORK EXTENDS SOUTH FROM THE NAPE AREA, THROUGH THE CHAVANE AREA AND SOUTH TOWARD THE XE KAMAN RIVER.

3. BACKGROUND:

THE ENEMY BEGAN EXTENSIVE OPEN-WIRE TELECOMMUNICATIONS CONSTRUCTION IN DECEMBER 1968 DURING THE SIEGE OF KHE SANH. NEW SEGMENTS HAVE BEEN CONTINUALLY CONSTRUCTED SINCE THEN.

4. MISSION READOUT:

THE LAOS/SOUTH VIETNAM OPEN-WIRE TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORK PRESENTLY CONSISTS OF TWO NETWORK SUB-SYSTEMS AND RECENT TELECOMMUNICATIONS TRACE CONSTRUCTION (PRESENTLY UNNUMBERED).

LA/VS LINE ONE IS AN EXTENSION OF NORTH VIETNAM BRANCH LINE 4A, WHICH PARALLELS ROUTE 1036. FROM THE BORDER THE LINE EXTENDS GENERALLY SOUTH, THROUGH 16-41N 106-23E (APPROXIMATE LOCATION) WHERE POLES WITH SIX INSULATORS AND WIRES ARE OBSERVED. CONTINUING SOUTH, LINE ONE CROSSES ROUTES NINE AND 914.

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GROUP 1: EXCLUDED FROM  
AUTOMATIC DOWNGRADING  
AND DECLASSIFICATION

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THE LINE THEN CURVES ESE AND CROSSES ROUTES 92 AND 922 BEFORE CROSSING THE LAOS/SOUTH VIETNAM BORDER TO TERMINATE IN THE NORTH END OF THE ASHAU VALLEY. AT THE POINT WHERE LINE ONE CROSSES ROUTE 92 ONLY FOUR INSULATORS ARE OBSERVED RATHER THAN THE SIX OBSERVED FURTHER NORTH. THREE BRANCH LINES (1A, 1B AND 1C) EXTEND FROM LINE ONE. BRANCH LINE 1A CONNECTS WITH LINE ONE ON BOTH ENDS AND EXTENDS THROUGH THE AREA AROUND THE JUNCTION OF ROUTES 92 AND 926. BRANCH LINES 1B AND 1C PROVIDE ADDITIONAL LINKS INTO SOUTH VIETNAM.

LA/VS LINE 2 HAS NOT BEEN CONNECTED TO ANY EXISTING NORTH VIETNAM NETWORK. THE LINE EXTENDS SSE FROM A POINT 16 NM SOUTH OF MU GIA PASS, CROSSING ROUTES 912 AND 91 AND PASSING THROUGH THE SEPONE AREA. FROM THIS POINT, THE LINE CROSSES ROUTE 9 AND RUNS PARALLEL TO ROUTE 914 UNTIL IT CROSSES ROUTE 92 WITHIN A MILE OF LA/VS LINE ONE. SINGLE VERTICAL POLES WITH TWO WIRES AND INSULATORS ARE OBSERVED IN THIS AREA. THE LINE CONTINUES SSE, RECROSSES ROUTE 92 WEST OF THE ROUTE 92/922 JUNCTION, GOES THROUGH THE BAN BAC AREA (WHEN TWO WIRES AND INSULATORS ARE AGAIN OBSERVED), CROSSES ROUTE 96 AT CHAVANE, AND TERMINATES 15 NM SSE OF CHAVANE ON A RIDGE LINE.

THREE BRANCH LINES (2A, 2B AND 2C) EXTEND FROM LINE TWO. BRANCH LINE 2A (WHICH ALSO INCLUDES TWO WIRES) EXTENDS EAST FROM LA/VS LINE TWO AND GENERALLY PARALLELS ROUTE 922 AND LA/VS LINE ONE, CROSSING THE LAOS/SOUTH VIETNAM BORDER INTO THE ASHAU VALLEY. FROM THIS POINT, THE LINE PROCEEDS SOUTHEAST WITHIN THE VALLEY, THROUGH A SALIENT OF LAOS, AND THEN BACK INTO SOUTH VIETNAM.

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BRANCH LINE 2B IS A SHORT SEGMENT CONNECTING LA/VN LINE TWO WITH A DISPERSED PROBABLE MILITARY FACILITY ON NEARBY ROUTE 96. BRANCH LINE 2C EXTENDS ENE FROM LA/VN LINE TWO IN THE CHAVANE AREA AND GENERALLY PARALLELS ROUTE 165 TO A TERMINATION POINT NEAR THE HOUAY PAYOUT RIVER.

NEW TELECOMMUNICATION TRACES, ALL UNNUMBERED, ARE OBSERVED IN THE NAPE/LAK SAO AND SEPONE AREAS. IN THE NORTHERN AREA, A TRACE EXTENDS SW FROM THE LAOS/NORTH VIETNAM BORDER THROUGH NAPE AND TO A POINT IN THE VICINITY OF LAK SAO. FROM HERE, IT IS INTERMITTENTLY OBSERVED EXTENDING SOUTH IN A LINE PARALLEL TO ROUTE 8. THE LAST OBSERVED PORTION TERMINATES JUST SOUTH OF THE ABANDONED BAN SI NHO AIRFIELD. POLES HAVE BEEN OBSERVED ONLY ON THIS SOUTHERN-MOST PORTION.

IN THE SEPONE AREA TWO SHORT SEGMENTS OF TRACE ARE OBSERVED. THE FIRST EXTENDS NORTHWEST FROM THE VICINITY OF SEPONE VILLAGE FOR APPROXIMATELY 8 NM. ITS ALIGNMENT INDICATES IT WILL PROBABLY CONNECT WITH LA/VN LINE TWO. THE SECOND SEGMENT, APPROXIMATELY 6 NM LONG, EXTENDS ALONG A NORTH/SOUTH AXIS SEVERAL MILES NORTHEAST OF SEPONE. IT CANNOT AT THIS TIME BE FIRMLY ASSOCIATED WITH ANY OTHER PARTICULAR LINE.

A TWO WIRE LINE WAS CONSTRUCTED THROUGH THE DMZ INTO LAOS IN 1966. SINCE THAT TIME NPIC HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO PHOTO-CONFIRM ANY EXTENSION OF THE ORIGINAL LINE WHICH WAS DESIGNATED NVN LINE THREE.

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5. COLLATERAL:

COLLATERAL SOURCES REPORT THAT IN MANY AREAS THE LANDLINES ARE ATTACHED TO TREES ONLY A FEW FEET OFF THE GROUND. SUCH LINES ARE GENERALLY UNDER DENSE TREE CANOPY AND THERE ARE NO TRACES TO BE SEEN FROM THE AIR. THIS PRACTICE COULD ACCOUNT FOR THE FACT THAT PHOTOGRAPHIC CONFIRMATION HAS BEEN UNOBTAINABLE FOR PARTS OF THE NETWORK.

REPORTS ALSO INDICATE THAT IN SOME AREAS OF THE PANHANDLE NVN REAR SERVICE UNITS WERE ENGAGED IN PROTECTING AND REPAIRING AS WELL AS BUILDING LANDLINES.

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MAP (UTM) REFERENCE: PILOTAGE CHART 1:500,000 J-11D, K-10A

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